

Establishing a school wellbeing committee



A school wellbeing committee is essentially an advisory group focused on the wellbeing of staff. It can also include a focus on student wellbeing and broader school community wellbeing. The committee is typically formed at the school level and the number of committee members will vary in accordance with the size of the school. Depending upon that target focus of the committee i.e., is the committee focused on solely staff wellbeing or staff and student wellbeing it can include individuals such as school staff, students, family members, and community members.

Wellbeing committees plan, promote, and implement wellbeing initiatives for staff to improve their mental and physical health. Some examples of objectives of a wellbeing committee include:

- Organise activities for colleagues that will increase awareness of and skills to improve wellbeing.
- Encourage all levels of leadership to engage in creating a supportive environment for staff to learn and implement strategies to improve and maintain their wellbeing.
- Put forward suggested policy recommendations on wellbeing to leadership for consideration.
- To make staff aware of opportunities to improve their wellbeing provided by their school/system.

Establishing a wellbeing committee

The school made a commitment to staff wellbeing three years ago. Since beginning we have directed our focus more specifically to identifying issues around staff wellbeing that we feel we have some control over and therefore can do something about.

As a school leadership team we believed that forming a wellbeing committee would be an opportunity to establish support for wellbeing in our school and while it would require an investment in time that this would be balanced by the potential gains we could make as a staff.

The committee is made up of volunteer staff members from across our school who meet once a term. In the beginning the committee sought ideas from their colleagues and scheduled whole staff events which were not mandatory but provided opportunity for staff to connect and engage in fun events that promoted the importance of making time for wellbeing on an individual level. The initial feedback from staff was positive and the committee was encouraged to move to the next level.



Their focus has since shifted more towards creating an annual wellbeing survey, analysing its results and formulating an action plan but they also consider issues raised by members of staff. The survey is simple but effective. We seek to make sure that the committee is representative of the different teams of staff within the school.

Outcomes

Every year, a report for the Senior Leadership team on staff wellbeing is created and shared with all staff and the committee terms of reference are reviewed annually. They were introduced to give clear purpose to the work of the committee so that it did not simply become a 'talking shop'.

All documentation, including minutes of meetings, are freely available to all staff via our intranet. The principle of transparency is designed to increase confidence, trust and accountability in what we seek to do.

Tips for consideration: Establishing a school wellbeing committee

- The committee should comprise of members from the leadership team and representatives from all staff.
- The role of the committee could be to promote and to ensure the wellbeing of all employees at the school and to provide advice to the Leadership Team for consideration on all matters relating to wellbeing within the school.
- It is key that any committee keeps their colleagues informed of their progress and how they are evaluating the impact of any initiatives implemented.
- Scheduling timely review of any initiative and policies will contribute towards achieving positive impact.
- The schedule of meetings should be agreed by all members, but it is recommended that a full committee meeting is held at least once a term. A meeting schedule of these meetings and the membership of the committee should be regularly published to all staff so that staff can take any issues to their representative for discussion.
- The committee should take appropriate steps to report to the Leadership Team.
- The committee should ensure that its members receive appropriate training to undertake their duties.
- It is recommended that the terms of reference be reviewed on a yearly basis and any proposed changes should be agreed with by the Leadership team before adopting.
- As with any effective committee it is suggested that an agreed terms of reference is provided to committee members to ensure that their role and responsibilities are clear and transparent.